



Illinois Department of Revenue

For Immediate Release
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MADIGAN, HAMER ANNOUNCE CHRISTIAN COUNTY ILLEGAL GAMBLING CHARGES

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan and Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) Director Brian Hamer today announced charges against three individuals for illegal gambling. The charges stemmed from a raid of four establishments in Christian County. The raids and charges occurred yesterday.

The operation involved the investigation of alleged illegal gambling at four bars in Christian County and focused on owners of establishments and bartenders who allegedly regularly made cash payouts on video slot machines and video poker machines. The investigation was based primarily on covert activities of IDOR Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI) Special Agents over a four-month period beginning in August 2004. Madigan's office will prosecute the cases.

The targets of the raid included Major Leagues, 105 N. Walnut St., Taylorville; The Dugout, 116 E. Main St., Taylorville; HT's Tavern, 501 Midland Blvd., Tovey; and The Patch, 1212 W. Taylor St., Taylorville. Yesterday, three targets of the investigation were charged with Gambling and Keeping A Gambling Place. Each charge is a Class A Misdemeanor punishable by up to 364 days in the county jail and a \$2,500 fine. In addition, any conviction for Keeping A Gambling Place could result in a revocation of a bar's liquor license at the address for up to one year and a possible permanent prohibition of a liquor license for the bar owner. In addition, Madigan's office will bring complaints for forfeiture of the gambling machines and any gambling proceeds.

"While these activities may seem harmless to some, making payouts based on video poker games and slot machines is against the law, no matter who is doing it," Madigan said. "Anti-gambling laws apply to all Illinoisans."

"These machines are illegal, and the owners are not paying tax on the significant amount of money that they make from this illegal activity," Hamer said. "The raids, arrests and seizures send a strong message that this activity will not be tolerated."

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The following individuals were arrested and charged on January 6, 2005.

Jinnie Etheridge, 25, Taylorville. Etheridge, bartender/manager of HT's Tavern, was charged with two counts of Gambling and two counts of Keeping A Gambling Place. She allegedly made payouts to undercover IDOR agents on August 5, 2004, and August 19, 2004.

Ramona "Mona" Foreman, 50, Taylorville. Foreman, bartender/manager of Major Leagues, was charged with two counts of Gambling and one count of Keeping A Gambling Place. She allegedly made payouts to undercover IDOR agents on November 10, 2004.

David "Walt" Winger, 53, Taylorville. Winger, bartender/manager of The Dugout, was charged with two counts of Gambling and one count of Keeping A Gambling Place. He allegedly made payouts to undercover IDOR agents on August 18, 2004.

Additionally, IDOR agents seized the following items:

- ✓ Five video slot and video poker machines and \$840 from Major Leagues.
- ✓ Nine video slot and video poker machines and \$1,292 from The Dugout.
- ✓ Nine video slot and video poker machines and \$228 from HT's Tavern.
- ✓ Eight video slot and video poker machines and \$1,542 from The Patch.

In addition to the above seizures, IDOR BCI agents seized several digital video recorders, VCRs, VHS tapes and TV monitors that may or may not contain evidence of other gambling offenses.

The public is reminded that these charges are merely accusations. The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.